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Pleistocene Fossils from McPherson County, Kansas 1921 TO 1924

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During the last few years a number of interesting fossils have been brought to light in the vicinity of McPherson by excavations which have been carried on, especially in the sand pits of this region. It is thought desirable to record for future reference these various finds, for even though the majority of them present nothing new to science, they contribute to the knowledge of the distribution of such materials, and constitute a permanent record for the use of workers in this part of the state. With the exceptions noted below this material has been submitted to H. T. Martin, of Kansas University, and provisionally classified by him as follows:

HOMO sapiens. The paleolithic axes exhibited to this body in connection with the paper on Archaeology in McPherson County, by Dr. Vance N. Robb, together with several other artefacts classified by Winchell as early neolithic, point at least to the probable existence of man in this region during the pleistocene time.

MASTODON americanus. A milk tooth was found in one of the sand pits one mile south of town several years ago and presented to Dr. V. N. Robb. The crown of the tooth is largely broken away, but the remainder is in an excellent state of preservation. A considerable portion of a tusk was found in the sand pit a mile southeast of town in 1922 and described to me by Allan Morine, a high school boy, who brought me a piece of it. The specimen was described as being about two or two and a half feet long when uncovered, but was broken up and divided among the workmen. The point of a tusk was brought to me from a sand pit 8 miles west of town, and from the same pit was brought a piece of what appears to be the femur of an elephantine animal, and may be of the same species.

ELEPHAS primogenius. This ancient American elephant is widely distributed in Kansas, and has not failed to register its abode in the region of McPherson. A complete heel-bone (calcaneum) was found during the summer of 1922 in the local sand pit to the south, and was presented to the museum by Samuel Ebbert. Two fine grinding teeth were found while excavating for a septic tank just east of Circle Lake in 1912. During the past winter almost a complete skull was unearthed four miles southwest of Darlow, Kansas. When unearthed it was so badly decayed that only parts of it could be preserved, and those with considerable difficulty. A piece of the skull comprising about two square feet from the forehead was preserved intact and is in the McPherson College museum. This part was doubtless better preserved because of its being buried below the water line.

BISON occidentalis. A calcaneum and two humerals in excellent state of preservation are in our possession. The former from the

sand pit southeast of town and the latter were dug from similar situations near Nickerson and Durham respectively.

EQUUS niobrarensis. Several teeth and a well preserved metacarpal obtained from a sand pit west of McPherson.

EQUUS complicatus(?) One premolar tooth from the locality just described.

EQUUS sp. A very finely preserved digit from the sand pit southeast of McPherson, was found associated with the calcaneum of *Eliphas primogenus*. This specimen was submitted to the Field Museum, the American Museum, and the University of California, but has not yet been identified with certainty.

CAMELOPS kansanus Of this ancient camel we have obtained from the sand pit southeast of McPherson a portion of a right ulna, a right podial, and a second digit from the left side. From the pit eight miles west, a complete metacarpal, and a large part of a lower jaw with four perfect teeth. These are all well preserved.

MYLODON harlani(?) On December 29, 1924, Mr. H. F. Hammann twelve miles northwest of McPherson unearthed a perfect vertebra of *Mylodon*. The bone was of such size as to cause him to bring it into town for examination. It was left at the office of the McPherson Republican, and later submitted to me for examination by Mr. Oelrich. It was found to correspond exactly with the sixth caudal vertebra of the mounted skeleton of *Mylodon harlani* in the McPherson College Museum, except for the fact that it measured about a fifth larger. It was later submitted to Dr. Chester Stock of the University of California, who reported as follows: "I would hesitate to say that the ground sloth specimen represents a species other than *harlani* for this form, as known by the materials from Rancho La Brea, shows considerable variation in its skeletal structures. It would hardly be safe to make a definite determination on only a caudal vertebra. I should, therefore, be inclined to refer the material to *Mylodon*, near *harlani* Owen."

I have been unable to find any definite record of *Mylodon* remains being previously discovered in Kansas. Williston reports as questionable a fibula from Seneca, Kansas, which he provisionally refers to this species. The McPherson find constitutes at least one definite record of the giant ground sloth from Kansas. Subsequently a visit will be made to the locality from which it was obtained, and a search made for additional material of the same species. The specimen is now preserved in the college museum.